



Testimony of Robert A. Brex
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Regional Action Council for Northeast Connecticut and member, Connecticut Prevention Network

***H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

*February 23 2017 Appropriations Subcommittee on Health Public Hearing
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Regional Action Council Funding*

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Senator Markley, Representative Dillon and members of the Appropriations Subcommittee, my name is Bob Brex and I am the Executive Director of Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse (NECASA) and a founding member of the Connecticut Prevention Network. I am here today to strongly oppose the grave cuts to regional action councils that will decimate the current prevention infrastructure.

I have been a Regional Action Council(RAC) Executive Director for over 27 years, going back to the origins of the system established in 1989 by the Connecticut State Legislature. The budget proposal presented by the Governor's office/OPM would destroy the functional ability of the RAC system to deliver services to their cities and towns throughout the state. The language you have been given in the budget document is that we are a Mental Health and Substance Abuse Advocacy Organization. This is an egregious misrepresentation of our purpose and value to our communities.

While NECASA and other RACs do advocacy for prevention, treatment and aftercare especially around legislation, we do so much more!!!!

Let me highlight just some of the efforts and successes of NECASA.

- *NECASA currently facilitates an Opioid Action Group consisting of legislators, family members of those who have overdosed, Doctors, Hospitals and treatment agencies. We have held multiple community forums to educate people around the issue but also are actively working to produce better and more accessible prevention, treatment and aftercare for the Northeast corner. In addition, as a Narcan trainer, I train people in the use of Narcan and under a program of the Department of Public health have been able to provide overdose kits to those that are trained in their use. This evening I will be training in the Town of Griswold and therefore am submitting this testimony.*
- *NECASA has brought 2.5 Million dollars in additional prevention funding to the region beyond our state dollars. This has been through direct federal grants, contracts and donations.*

- *NECASA oversees 12 local prevention councils and has provided technical assistance and over 1 million dollars to them for local prevention efforts in our 21 towns.*
- *NECASA purchased evidence-based curriculums (scientifically proven to work) for ten of our school districts.*
- *NECASA helped establish a drug intervention program in the Danielson Superior Court to treat non-violent offenders. Patterned after a drug court this program has been operational for 12 years.*
- *NECASA under a federal drug free mentoring grant, mentored the Town of Putnam and the Town of Windham so that they could receive their own Federal drug free grants. Almost 2 million dollars of federal fund will be received by those communities when their grants conclude in 2018-2019.*

I ask that you not dismantle a system that has worked to provide needed funds, information and programs and to restore the funding to the regional action councils.

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